

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6099

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Ways & Means, April 4, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to water right fees.

**Brief Description:** Modifying water right fees.

**Sponsors:** Senator Prentice; by request of Office of Financial Management.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Ways & Means: 4/4/05 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Rockefeller and Thibaudeau.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Pflug, Roach and Schoesler.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred with out recommendation.

Signed by Senators Brandland and Parlette.

**Staff:** Brian Sims (786-7431)

**Background:** The Department of Ecology charges fees for processing applications for water rights. Water rights give property owners, municipalities, irrigation districts, and others the right to withdraw water from wells or waterways, or to store water for later use. The current minimum fee is \$10 for up to one cubic foot per second of water. The fee is graduated at higher volumes of water. These fees cover only a small portion of the processing of water rights applications.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill changes and increases the fees charged for water rights applications. The table below shows the examples of the changes.

*Existing Fees:*

- minimum to process application -- \$10 for up to 1 cu ft/sec;
- beyond the Minimum -- \$2 per cu ft/sec (lower cost after 500 cu tf/sec);
- application for change to water right -- \$4 for the first 100 words; and
- application for storage -- 1 cent per acre-foot.

*SB 6099 Fees:*

- minimum to process application -- ft/sec\$50 for up to 1/2 cu ft/sec;
- beyond the minimum -- \$100 per cu ft/sec;
- application for change to water right -- \$50 minimum; and

- application for storage -- \$2 per acre foot with \$50 minimum.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Fees for water rights applications pay for less than one percent of the cost to process the applications. Fees have not increased since the 1950s. These increases are reasonable and Washington's fees would still be below many other western states.

Other: As written, the bill would have an unintended high cost for hydraulic projects.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Jim Cahill, Office of Financial Management; Ken Slattery, Department of Ecology. OTHER: Robert Mack, City of Tacoma; Bill Stauffacher, Washington Public Utility District Association; Kristen Sawin, Association of Washington Business.